



Name of Property: Patsy Cline House
City, State: Winchester, Virginia
Period of Significance: 1948–1957
NHL Criteria: 1, 2
NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
2. Visual and Performing Arts
Previous Recognition: National Register of Historic Places, 2005
National Historic Context: Women's History Initiative
XXII. Music
D. Popular
K. Performers (Soloists and Ensembles)
O. Recording

NHL Significance:

- The Patsy Cline House in Winchester, Virginia, is nationally significant under Criteria 1 and 2 for its association with singer Patsy Cline and with the development of country music in the mid-twentieth century. Born in 1932 as Virginia Patterson Hensley, Patsy Cline became one of the most popular and successful country music stars of the 1950s



and early 1960s.

- Cline’s singing career outstandingly illustrates important trends in the history of country music in the post-World War II era, including the declining importance of live radio, the growth of the country music recording industry in Nashville, the emergence of honky tonk as both a sound and venue, and the tensions between expanding the country music audience and preserving its distinctive sound and traditions. Cline played an important role in creating and popularizing the Nashville Sound, a variety of country music that incorporated elements of pop music in order to reach a broader audience.
- Cline’s broad popular appeal opened doors for solo female artists in the country music business. She had multiple hit records on the country and pop charts in the early 1960s, and successfully headlined live performances. In doing so, she demonstrated to the country music industry that women could match their male counterparts in record sales and popularity.
- The Patsy Cline House stands out from comparable properties for the length of its association with Cline during her productive career. She moved to 608 South Kent Street in 1948, the same year that she began singing professionally, and she continued to be associated with the property for the next nine years. Between her departure from Winchester in 1957 and her death in 1963, Cline lived in four different houses, occupying each property for less than three years.

Integrity:

- The Patsy Cline House possesses a high level of overall integrity in the aspects most critical to conveying its significance: association, location, setting, and feeling.
- The house is associated with Patsy Cline during the first nine years of her productive career (1948–1957), and she was living there when she signed her first recording contract, made a name for herself in regional country music circles, and had her first hit record with “Walkin’ After Midnight” (1957).
- Situated in its original location within a neighborhood that retains its mid-twentieth-century character, the Patsy Cline House possesses a high level of integrity of location and setting, which in turn contribute to a high degree of integrity of feeling.
- Integrity of design and materials in the physical features and spaces most closely associated with Cline also contributes to the property’s integrity of feeling. Most of the exterior alterations since the end of the period of significance affect rear additions that are not highly visible due to the close spacing of the buildings. Most of the interior finishes were present during the period of significance, and minor changes to the floor plan do not substantially detract from the building’s ability to convey its significant association with Patsy Cline.

Owner of Property: Celebrating Patsy Cline, Inc.

Acres of Property: 0.17 acres

Origins of Nomination: The nomination was funded by the NHL Program through the Women’s History Initiative to increase the number of NHLs representing women’s history.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: Designating the Patsy Cline House as a National Historic Landmark will not only recognize one of the greatest country music singers of the mid-20th century but will also assist in preserving the building and keeping it open to the public.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None is known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of September 9, 2020):

- Karen Helm, President, Celebrating Patsy Cline, Inc. (owner) – 5/25/2017

National Historic Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Add information about other comparable properties, particularly those connected to the Nashville Sound (i.e. the RCA Victor Building in Nashville, Tennessee).
- Identified issues regarding discussion of certain design elements, the location of the property, and the integrity of setting, which will be addressed in the revised nomination.

National Historic Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Patsy Cline House in Winchester, Virginia, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: